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Cyprus

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I. Introduction, methodology and consultation process

1. The present Report has been prepared by the Law Commissioner of Cyprus, in line with the guidance provided by the relevant Human Rights Council Resolutions, including No.5/1 and No.16/21, and Decisions, including Decision HRC17/119, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acting as a coordinator among other competent Ministries and authorities, including the Anti-Discrimination Body (ADB), the National Machinery for Women's Rights (NMWR) and the Independent Authority for the Investigation of Allegations and Complaints against the Police (IAIACAP). In its preparation, the Government strove for a transparent, inclusive process and held consultations with civil society organizations to take on board their views on various issues.

2. Cyprus is working towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, as it believes in a holistic approach in terms of human rights. Cyprus was thus one of the first countries to conduct a national voluntary review on the implementation of *Agenda 2030* in 2017 and is now looking to working with line Ministries, local authorities and civil society, to inform, educate and implement with a view to further improve its record.

3. Cyprus, recognizing that the destruction of or damage to cultural heritage may have a detrimental and irreversible impact on the enjoyment of cultural rights, in particular the right to freely access and enjoy cultural life and cultural heritage, actively promotes the adoption of measures against the destruction and illicit trafficking of cultural heritage. At the Human Rights Council, Cyprus has successfully promoted the unanimous adoption of the Resolution «*Cultural rights and the protection of cultural heritage*» in 2016 and 2018. Moreover, during the Cyprus Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2016–17, the Council of Europe Convention on Offences Relating to Cultural Property ("the Nicosia Convention") was adopted. This Convention is the first international binding legal instrument which incorporates criminal provisions regarding perpetrators who destroy, steel or illicitly trade cultural heritage treasures.

4. The human rights framework reminds us that climate change is also about the results that emanate directly from the damage we are causing to nature. Many communities already feel the adverse effects of warming temperatures and desertification. Undoubtedly, the human rights obligations of governments do not stop at their own borders. With this in mind, the Cyprus Government has recently announced its decision to assume a leading role and coordinate efforts with countries of the region in a common effort to reverse the impact of climate change and its negative repercussions, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean.

5. Prioritizing the protection and promotion of women's rights and gender equality via the implementation of the *New National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-2021*, one of the key objective of which is "Empowering the Vulnerable Groups of Women". It places emphasis on overcoming obstacles faced in particular by vulnerable groups, including migrant women, refugees, asylum seekers, single-parents, LGBTIs, persons with disabilities and elderly persons.

6. Due to the continued illegal occupation of 36.2% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, the Government is not in a position to exercise effective control over all of its territory and thus cannot ensure the application of the Human Rights instruments to areas not under its effective control. This is a fact reflected in the *Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Question of Human Rights in Cyprus*. As a consequence, the Government is unable to ensure full realization of its policies and to apply its laws, policies and programmes concerning human rights, to those living in the occupied part of the country. It is relevant to recall that, the accession of Cyprus to the EU was subject to Protocol 10 of the *2003 Act of Accession*, according to which the application of the acquis "is suspended in those areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control". Consequently, all information and data presented in the present Report, concern the Government-controlled areas.

7. The present Report focuses on the developments in legislation, administration, government policies and National Action Plans (NAPs), from January 2014 onwards.

Reference is made to the recommendations that emanated during the second cycle session of UPR (A/HRC/26/14).

Improvement of the normative and structural framework for protection of human rights[1]

8. Cyprus has ratified or is in the process of ratifying the following instruments:

- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure (ratified in 2017).
- The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence[2] (Istanbul Convention) (ratified in 2017). In view of the Government's sustained efforts to promote and protect women's rights, bills are being promoted on criminalising harassment and stalking, as well as all forms of violence against women.
- A bill to pave the way for the ratification of the 1954 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness is pending before the House of Representatives.
- Steps have been taken to ratify the 1961 Convention of the Reduction of Statelessness.[3]
- The Agreement on the Status and Functions of the International Commission on Missing Persons (ratified in May 2018). Cyprus is one of the founding members of this Organization working on the humanitarian issue of missing persons.
- The Convention on the International Protection of Adults (ratified in June 2018).
- The Charter on inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (ratified in October 2018).

Regarding other recommendations

- Cyprus has not signed the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, as its provisions fall within EU competence and Member States cannot accede unilaterally. Cyprus has transposed the relevant EU acquis fostering the rights of migrants and their families into its domestic law.[4]
- The ratification of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189) is[5] under examination, although most of its provisions are covered by the EU acquis and are, therefore, largely met by domestic legislation and practise.
- Ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) is currently under consideration by all competent authorities.[6]
- Cyprus is in the process of signing the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.[7] Different Ministries/Services are involved and the assessment of the need for legislative provisions to successfully implement the Optional Protocol has not yet been finalized.

9. The following domestic legislative framework was adopted:[8]

- The Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2014, [L.91(I)/2014]
- The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Ratification) Law of 2014, [L. 21(III)/2014]
- The Prevention and Combating of Human Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings and the Protection of Victims Law of 2014, [L.60(I)/2014]

- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communication Procedure (Ratification) Law of 2017, [L.13(III)/2017]
- The Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification) Law of 2017, [L.14(III)/2017][9]
- The Refugees (Amendment) Law of 2017. [L.112(I)/2007]

II. Protecting vulnerable groups[10]

A. Women

10. Measures to further strengthen the NMWR are under consideration, while its budget has increased by almost 30% towards promoting gender equality programmes at the national level. Furthermore, work is underway to enhance the Commissioner for Gender Equality's legal status in order to allow for more effective implementation of horizontal policy on gender equality.[11]

11. The new National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-2021 (Objective "Empowering the Vulnerable Groups of Women") is a cornerstone of policy, which takes into account the various obstacles, difficulties and challenges faced by vulnerable groups of women, including migrant women, refugees, asylum seekers, single-parents, LGBTI, persons with disabilities and elderly persons. This Action Plan includes, (but is not limited to), access to free and/or affordable legal services for these vulnerable groups, training programmes specifically designed for Government bodies/officers dealing with these groups, cultivation of a climate of acceptance within schools, operating the state shelter for female victims of sexual exploitation and establishing a Government-funded NGO-operated shelter for victims of human trafficking.

12. The Government further provides financial assistance and subsidizes Social Care Programmes, run by NGOs and local authorities, to assist vulnerable groups, including women.

Women and health[12]

13. The Ministry of Health (MOH) provides services/consultation for women of all ages and special programmes for pregnant women. These include anti-smoking programmes, lectures on AIDS and other STDs in combination with reproductive issues, including contraception and human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccination.

14. The National AIDS programme aims to curb transmission and also address the social and personal issues arising from HIV infection. In this context, all pregnant women, including in rural areas, are offered testing and counselling for HIV and all seropositive pregnant women and their new-borns are provided free regimens. The treatment is based on the European HIV/AIDS Guidelines.

15. Women aged over 63 with limited ability to travel and/or mobility problems, receive nursing care at home. Their diet is supervised by a clinical Dietician or doctor and they have access to free medical care.

Combating gender discrimination in education[13]

16. The New Curricula of the public education system aim to combat gender stereotypes from an early age, by addressing inter-personal relations; introducing family planning and sexual/reproductive health in the classroom; promoting diversity and confronting prejudice; and systematically working against stereotypes, social exclusion and racism. Teacher-training has also been enhanced, including via in-school programmes and participation in EU and Council of Europe pilot projects on human rights, and within that in dealing with controversial issues at school and beyond.[14]

17. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), through the Action Plan of the Interdepartmental Committee for Gender Equality in Education (2018–2020) promotes gender equality in the educational system and provides in-service training to teachers, while the Pedagogical Institute is actively providing information on promoting equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming in education.[15]

18. Furthermore, in cooperation with the Cyprus Radio, Television Authority (CRTA), the MOEC offers workshops to primary school children on raising awareness with the ultimate aim of combating stereotypical representation of individuals and/or groups in the media.

19. For the academic year 2015–206, 73.8% of participants at the Adult Education Centres are women. These Centres provide free and easily accessible courses on a wide-variety of subjects, providing life-long learning skills.

Combating gender discrimination in employment[16]

20. Combating discrimination in employment and guaranteeing equal access to employment, on a non-discriminatory basis, remains a priority.

21. Various actions and measures have been undertaken to close the gender pay gap, involving interventions in every relevant field, including certifying businesses with the "best practise" and 'equality employer" certificate. The gap decreased significantly since 2007 (22%), reaching 13.9% in 2016, despite the economic crisis and having to implement a strict economic adjustment programme during 2013–2016. Since most of the measures are ongoing or expected to have a long-term effect, the downward trend of the gender pay gap in Cyprus is expected to continue.

22. Further amendments (2017 and 2018) to *the Maternity Protection Law*[17] have extended the protection afforded to pregnant women, providing surrogate mothers with 14 weeks of maternity leave and extending the prohibition of dismissal of the mother from 3 to 5 months after the end of her maternity leave, respectively. Employers must provide all necessary conveniences for breastfeeding. Penalties for offenses have also been increased.

23. In 2017, the Protection of Paternity Law (L. 117(I)/2017) was introduced, entitling working-fathers to two consecutive weeks of paid leave during the first 16 weeks from the week of the birth/adoption of a child. The Parental Leave and Leave on Ground of Force Majeure Law [47(I)/2012], entitles parents, irrespective of sex, to 18 weeks of unpaid parental leave, or 23 weeks in the case of widowed parents.

24. As concerns women in the military, *the National Guard Law* was amended in 2016 to allow women to be recruited as contract soldiers. The legislation as regards non-commissioned officers is gender blind.

Combating domestic violence[18]

25. The main objectives of the 2017-2019 National Action Plan (NAP) for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family focuses on preventing domestic violence, training professionals, ensuring effective enforcement of legislation and enhancing the protection of victims and the support services they are offered.[19] In creating this NAP serious consideration was given to the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), international NGO research and the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.

26. Recognizing the seriousness of domestic violence and the need to take further measures to tackle it, the MLWSI signed in December 2017 a Protocol of Cooperation with the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family aiming at better and more efficient coordination between all competent services, on the basis of good practices in the field. The obligations and the actions that need to be undertaken by each party are clearly stated in the Protocol.

27. A series of measures including awareness-raising, systematic training of professionals involved in handling cases of domestic violence is actively undertaken.[20] One such example is a tailor-made Project, run by the Police together with NGOs, aimed at

preventing and combating violence against women through awareness-raising campaigns on gender issues.

28. A bill, based on the Istanbul Convention, criminalizing harassment and stalking, is currently pending before Parliament. Another comprehensive bill aiming to fully implement the provisions of the Istanbul Convention into domestic legislation which, inter alia, criminalises all forms of violence against women, has also been prepared.

29. The Third National Action Plan on Gender Equality (NAPGE) 2018-2021 provides for the mobilization of NGOs in relation to the prevention and handling of violence in the family, building on previous cooperation with such NGOs in running shelters, where women can stay temporarily with their children,[21] operating the crisis centre and other essential programmes.

30. In its continued efforts to raise sensitivity and awareness among Police Officers, a Protocol on Risk Assessment of Intimate Partners Violence has been implemented since January 2018. Within this framework, relevant lectures are included in the numerous programmes offered to Police Constables.

Women and the peace process[22]

31. Cyprus recognizes the indispensable role of women in conflict-resolution, post-conflict rehabilitation, reconciliation, and sustainable peace. Peace processes which lack the participation of women also lack credibility, while reconciliation is simply incomplete if it does not address violence against women in conflict.

32. Gender issues have gained greater prominence in the latest round of the Cyprus peace process through the examination of specific post-reunification constitutional provision, including the participation of women in political life. The UNSG himself has acknowledged "the concrete steps undertaken to foster the participation of women in the [Cyprus] negotiations".

33. Further, a bi-communal Technical Committee on Gender Equality was established with the overall objective of contributing to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent relevant resolutions by facilitating the solution of day to day problems arising from the current status quo, and advising the formal peace process in respect of gender issues. To this end, the members of the Committee have participated in track I meetings, discussing its views and submitting its suggestions to the chief negotiators, including on constitutional and other provisions that could be adopted as part of the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

34. Cypriot women have traditionally been the ones to initiate marches and civil society movements in support of peace, taking the lead in conciliatory action across the divide.

35. Cyprus is currently in the process of preparing the first National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. More specifically, the Commissioner for Gender Equality has undertaken, in close co-operation with civil society and an external expert, the drafting of the Action Plan on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), covering the period 2018-2021, which will ensure the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

B. Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and people in need of international protection[23]

36. The principle of non-refoulement has long been part of Cyprus law, whereby foreign nationals may not be refused entry or expelled if they risk persecution. There is an absolute prohibition on enforcing a refusal of entry or expulsion order if there are reasonable grounds for assuming that the foreign national concerned would be in danger of suffering capital or corporal punishment, torture or other inhumane or degrading treatment. A decision to refuse entry to or expel a foreign national may be appealed to a court of law.

37. Cyprus has ratified all international and European legal instruments for combating racism, xenophobia, violence, religious intolerance and hate speech.

38. Cyprus, via projects implemented by local authorities and/or NGOs under the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) National Program 2014-2020, is promoting the smooth integration of migrants into the Cypriot society (see Annex I).

Asylum seekers/beneficiaries of international protection[24]

39. A screening procedure to identify vulnerable persons from the early stages of the asylum application process was introduced according to the EU acquis. Priority is given to the examination of this category of applicants, in the presence of a psychologist and/or social worker if necessary or requested. A special reception centre for vulnerable persons will soon begin its operation, in an urban environment, close to services and health facilities.[25]

40. Pursuant to the *Refugees Law of 2000, [6(I)/2000, as amended]*, the detention of a minor who has applied for asylum is prohibited.

Accommodation

41. A person who applies for asylum (even if he/she entered the Republic in an irregular manner), is entitled to the rights provided by the Refugee Law, including housing.

42. The Kofinou Reception and Accommodation Centre for Applicants for International Protection grants accommodation and means of subsistence to those who cannot find housing.[26]

43. The coordination mechanism at the Reception Centre (composed of officials from all competent Government Services, UNHCR officers and local volunteers) aims at dealing with all issues directly and effectively.

44. All applicants have free access to healthcare, including mental care.[27]

Financial and material assistance/employment

45. Applicants of international protection can be employed in a number of sectors but, since asylum applications are examined within a maximum period of six months, applicants do not remain in these sectors for an extensive period. Once a person is granted refugee or subsidiary protection status, they automatically gain unlimited access to the labour market, with personalized support and access to the guaranteed minimum income benefit.[28]

Examination procedure/legal assistance

46. A person whose asylum application is pending examination at first or second instance, is protected from *refoulement* and has access to all rights provided by the Refugees Law. Asylum seekers maintain the right to remain in Cyprus until a decision by the Court is issued and no steps for deportation are initiated prior to that decision, according to the 2016 amendment of the Refugees Law, transposing a recast of the Procedures Directive (32/2013/EU).

47. An applicant has the right to free legal aid before the Administrative Court during the second instance examination of the asylum claim. However, there are co-funded projects providing free legal assistance even at first-instance.

48. In case a person in detention and pending deportation applies for asylum, the claim will be examined as a priority.[29]

High pressures deriving from the high numbers of asylum seekers[30]

49. There has been a sharp increase in applications for international protection. According to Eurostat, the highest rate per capita of registered first-time applicants during the first quarter 2018 in the EU was recorded in Cyprus (1551 first-time applicants per million population), followed by Greece (1204), Malta (856) and Luxembourg (753).

50. The Asylum Service has employed additional caseworkers to reduce the backlog and make headway in examining all cases. To face increasing pressure it will be increasing staff numbers further, also within the framework of the EASO Special Support Plan to Cyprus.

However, there is no indication that the numbers of new applications and/or arrivals of boats from Turkey will be reduced. On the contrary, it can be expected that the increasing trend will continue.[31]

Combating racial discrimination in education[32]

51. The MOEC is working on ensuring that the educational needs of non-Cypriot children are met, while Adult Education Centres provide free Greek-language lessons in the afternoons. It is also implementing a Code of Conduct against Racism and a Guide for Managing and Reporting Racist Incidents and through the Pedagogical Institute is actively supporting teachers and schools with implementing this policy[33].

Migrant workers[34]

52. Cyprus is in full compliance with the EU acquis regarding the rights of non-eu national workers. The fundamental rights of migrant workers, whatever their situation regarding their right of residence, are protected by Cyprus law.

Complaints mechanism

53. Especially for domestic workers and labourers, a special mechanism for resolving complaints has been established.

54. If the employment contract has been violated, penalties are imposed on the employer to deter repetition of such violations. In addition, the foreign worker is provided with a new employment permit. This procedure is of course additional to the legal right of any employee to proceed to the Labour Disputes Court.

55. In cases of suspected domestic violence, the professional examining the complaint has the duty to immediately inform the Police. The competent authorities are immediately notified in case of trafficking incidents or sexual exploitation attempts, or confiscation of migrant workers' passports or travel documents.

Private employment agencies

56. *The Private Employment Agency Law* regulating the establishment and operation of private employment agencies was enacted in 2012 and amended in 2013. The offenses described in the anti-trafficking Law have been included in this Law. The Law sets the conditions and qualifications that need to be fulfilled in relation to natural or legal persons operating such agencies. The criminal record of the applicant is examined, in order to safeguard that these persons have not been convicted for offences, such as sexual exploitation, or THB, or any other serious criminal offence. The competent authority may revoke the license of such an establishment.

57. In order to enforce the provisions of the Private Employment Agency Law, 124 out of 151 agencies were inspected and 12 licenses revolved. 14 complaints were examined and 4 cases of persons involved in the illegal operation of private employment agencies and/or exploitation of workers were forwarded to the police for further investigation and prosecution. During 2017, administrative fines were imposed on 3 private employment agencies involved in fraudulent practices.

Migrant children[35]

58. The Government takes every measure in order to serve the best interest of the child, with the purpose of family reunification within the framework of the Dublin regulation. Due to the increasing number of unaccompanied minors arriving in the Republic of Cyprus, the Government operates three state Homes for unaccompanied minors (two for girls and one for boys), while another two (for boys) are assigned for operation to an NGO. The Council of Ministers has recently approved the construction and operation of a new Reception Centre for Unaccompanied Minors with a capacity of 100, on the premises at Zygi. The Reception Centre will be operated by the Office of the IOM in Cyprus.

59. In 2017, a Foster Care Pilot Programme was co-funded under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) in order to improve the quality of foster families providing

hospitality for unaccompanied minors. It included the systematic evaluation of candidates for foster parenting as well as offering training to those who were successful after the screening.

60. Unaccompanied children or families with children are not held in detention.

61. Since 2014, adopting recommendations of the Commissioner for Children's Rights (CCR),it was decided that in case of an arrest/detention of an alien father for illegal stay/entry, the wife-mother of a child under the age of 18 is not arrested/detained. The SWS, the Aliens and Immigration Service (AIS) and the Civil Registry and Migration Department (CRMD) are notified. The CRMD determines conditions regarding their travel and the time that they must appear at the AIS. The same procedure is followed and in cases of a single mother/father.

62. Return decisions that concern a parent never include the detention of any minor.[36]

Work and residence permits[37]

63. Procedures regarding residence permits are currently under revision with the purpose of simplifying and clarifying the required criteria, the reasons for rejection, etc.

Contracts

64. The Government takes all the necessary steps for the improvement of the working conditions of all non-EU citizens. Terms of employment of non-EU nationals in all economic activities are identical to those provided for in collective agreements, so as to safeguard the equal treatment of all workers in Cyprus.

Domestic workers[38]

65. The contract of employment of foreign domestic workers, specifies, inter alia, working hours, annual leave as well as paid holidays. The employer is obliged to provide accommodation, medical insurance, food, visa fees, travel ticket to Cyprus and repatriation ticket.

66. Inspectors from the Department of Labour Inspections (DLI) may carry out inspections regarding the safety and health of all workers, including domestic workers. The Inspectors investigate complaints regarding safety and health of domestic workers and investigate accidents, occupational diseases and dangerous occurrences according to the relevant legislation.

Irregular migrants[39]

67. All persons in need (including migrants and their families and irregular migrants) have equal access to social services. Regardless of a parent's migratory status, children are entitled to basic human rights to health, education and social care.[40]

C. Children[41]

Rights of the child

68. The objective of the Government is that children and adolescents should be respected and given scope for personal development, safety and security and also for participation and influence.

Health

69. In 2017 a "Strategy on the Health Rights of the Child", an inter-sectoral plan led by the Ministry of Health, addressing non-communicable diseases, nutrition, preventing violence, alcohol-substance- and tobacco-use, and providing for safe environment and addressing sexual and reproductive health issues, was adopted, taking on board the recommendations of the CCR and following consultation with children.

Combating sexual abuse of children[42]

70. The Republic of Cyprus ratified the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection on Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse in 2015. In 2014, a comprehensive national law was enacted[43] to implement the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection on Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention).

71. A National Strategy on the Combating of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography was approved by Council of Ministers in March 2016 and a National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family for the period 2017-2019 was adopted.

72. The first Children's House (base on the model of the Nordic Barnahus) in Cyprus began operating in September 2017, in accordance with the National Strategy, to provide support for children victims of sexual abuse and/or exploitation and their families during the investigation procedure, but, also, the healing process by specially trained psychologists who collaborate with specially trained police investigators.

73. Since January 2017, a central police unit has been investigating all child sexual abuse allegations aiming at ensuring the best possible protection to child victims. It now partners with the Children's House. Emphasis has been given in police training courses for interviewing children and vulnerable witnesses.

74. The MOEC, recognizing its responsibility in the field of primary prevention, has established the Coordinating Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children. The Committee coordinates all matters concerning the protection of children from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and child pornography. The MOEC's Action Plan provides for compulsory trainings for teachers at all levels, involved in matters of sexual education, aiming at empowering them to implement the curriculum of Health Education. During the school year 2017-2018, a series of seminars on "Recognizing and Reporting Incidents of Sexual Abuse" were organized.

Education

75. Cyprus ensures equal access of all children to education while attributing great importance to accepting difference, promoting tolerance and respect in its educational policy. The MOEC offers free and accessible education to all pupils without prejudice based on gender, abilities, language, colour, religion, political beliefs or ethnic background.

76. Through its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan, the MOEC aims to increase access to quality education and provide opportunities for all students to succeed in their learning. Early detection of learning difficulties or behavioural issues is also a key priority, with Educational Psychologists assisting pupils and supporting teachers.

Rights of children with disabilities in education[44]

77. The inclusion of children with disabilities, in line with current international instruments, is a matter of priority for the Government. *The Education and Training of Children with Special Needs Law of 1999 [113(I)/1999], as amended* provides the legislative framework which regulates the identification, assessment, development and individualized educational programme and on-going evaluation of children with disabilities. The MOEC promotes the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms and the vast majority of children with disabilities are educated in this way at their local school.

78. Special emphasis is given to ensuring curriculum access to children with disabilities, with the use of assistive technology changes to teaching and learning arrangements, classroom organisation, extra time during exams etc. Furthermore, information that would normally be provided in writing is now also in Braille or in large print for children with visual disability, whereas sign language interpreters are available for deaf children. The MOEC ensures that schools have suitable infrastructure to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities.

79. A very small percentage of children with disabilities (less than 1% of the school population) are educated in Special Classes. A small number of Special Schools operate within the boundaries of a mainstream school. These schools develop networks and joint activities to minimize segregation. Special Schools have the appropriate staff (special teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, music therapists, physiotherapists, nurses and other specialists as well as auxiliary staff) in order to support and provide the essential means to meet the needs of all children. In addition to their educational programme, the special schools' programme contains a major element of self-help and independence skills, social and emotional skills development, recreational skills, communication skills and vocational training. Special Schools also have pre-vocational and vocational training programmes designed to assist the transition from school to work or from school to other vocational training. Education is also provided to children who are in hospital for a significant period of time or who, for medical or other reasons, must be educated at home.

Juvenile justice[45]

80. The MJPO in co-operation with the CCR, is promoting a Bill for introducing of a criminal justice system specially designed for the needs of children in conflict with the law and the regulation of matters relating to the prevention and treatment of delinquency of children within the framework of the criminal justice system, in accordance with internationally legally binding instruments and guidelines[46]. The bill establishes structures and diversion procedures.

81. The interest of the child is the primary consideration in any decision which directly or indirectly affects the child and the child participates in the taking of any decisions affecting him/her. The criminal proceedings and detention of a child is a last resort measure and can be implemented only if any other measures have been tried and failed, whereas imprisonment is totally prohibited. In cases of criminal proceedings instituted against a child, the case will be tried by a special juvenile court, on the basis of the principle that detention of a child is last resort measure and alternative punishments or measures should be implemented.

82. In the field of education, the Observatory for Violence in Schools has designed a four-year National Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in Schools, based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[47] and recommendations of the CCR.

Children of internally displaced person[48]

83. The Council of Ministers decided (Decision No.75.317, dated 19.6.2017) to recognise children of IDP mothers as displaced persons entitled to all rights the children of the IDP fathers have regarding all existing benefits (e.g. housing schemes). By the enactment of the necessary legislative amendment [L.170(I)/2013] on 27.12.2013, the children of IDP mothers can participate on an equal footing in housing schemes and in renting subsidy schemes.

D. LGBTI/transgeder persons[49]

84. In August 2018, Cyprus became 40th member of the Equal Rights Coalition, demonstrating Nicosia's commitment to advancing the rights of LGBTI persons and supporting initiatives promoting non-discrimination and equality.

85. New legislation is in preparation, setting a clear statutory process for correcting the registered sex of trans persons (adults and minors). This will only require a decision by the Registrar and not previous medical intervention or psychiatric reports. The consequences on the personal situation, family and other relationships of the person whose gender is redefined, will also be regulated.

86. In 2017, *the Criminal Code* was amended by Law 31(I)/2017 to include homophobic motivation as an aggravating circumstance (in addition to the racist and xenophobic motivation), with a maximum sentence of three years or a fine of 5000 euros or both.

III. Human rights and law enforcement[50]

Police

87. In a constant upgrading of its policy to develop a culture of respect of human rights and human dignity, the Police proceeded to the following actions:

- "The Police Code of Ethics" was enriched with new provisions
- A Memorandum of Understanding with NGOs was signed
- Manuals and informative materials were distributed to Police members
- Conferences were organized.

88. Since September 2018, the Police has partnered with the University of Cyprus for the education of Police Recruits where one Module, out of five, focuses on Human Rights. In addition, the training courses for Police Recruits at the Police Academy have been enriched to include a new Module on Human Rights in order to advance their training. Added emphasis is also given on the self development of Police Officers.

89. The Cyprus Police Academy, periodically organizes training programmes where lectures are included on investigating racially motivated crimes and hate crimes and the rights of detained persons. Working with the Office for Combating Discrimination and NGOs, programmes have also included training on elimination of stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination.

90. Victims of crime are informed of their rights to which they are entitled, through an informational booklet that is given to them from the first contact with the Police. The booklet is translated into six languages[51], including Braille. It is accessible to the public via the website of the Police.

The rights of detained persons[52]

91. The Government is undertaking serious efforts so that detention centres fully meet the European and international standards, with the aim of improving detention conditions and ensuring that detainees are accorded their rights and are afforded respect and dignity throughout their detention.

92. Actions taken include infrastructure improvements[53], including the creation of outdoor/ leisure areas, installation of TV and provisions of books. Additionally, some detention centers are accessible to people with disabilities. The Human Rights Office of the Police carries out visits to all detention centres and submits reports with recommendations for improving detention conditions. Visits by various national and international NGOs to Detention Centres are also encouraged in an effort to promote transparency.

93. Education on human rights issues is provided at all levels of police training, whereas specialized programmes are periodically organized focusing on detainees rights. Additionally, police members are also constantly informed through circular letters regarding human rights issues, including in terms of detainees.[54]

94. Harmonising domestic legislation with the EU Directives has meant granting additional rights to arrested/detained persons, while also codifying the right to a lawyer in criminal proceedings and in European arrest warrant. The right to third party access, consular authorities, and interpreters is also provided for.[55]

95. All rights of detained persons provided in the legislation are included in an informative booklet, a copy of which is given to every detainee without delay and can be kept throughout the detention period. The booklet is available in 19 languages.[56]

96. In order to address mental health issues of detainees, the Police in cooperation with the Mental Health Services (MHS) issued procedures for handling detainees with a high suicide-risk. Additionally, in cooperation with the Ombudsperson, the Police is examining the possibility of creating specially designed room for detainees who are suicidal.

Prisons

Contact with the outside world - Visits

97. The general prison reform has included the aim of bettering facilities, and ensuring a more humane approach. This has included provisions for open visits, where glass separators have been removed. There has been a 100% increase in the number of visitors each inmate may receive in total, but also the number of people they can see at any given visit. Visiting areas have been made more child-friendly, and children of detained persons have the opportunity not only to make frequent visits, but to also enjoy quality time with their parent, including dining in, watching films together, playing games, etc. Visitors who reside abroad are given the opportunity to have lengthier visits (2–3 hours).

Escorts

98. Inmates are encouraged to participate in social and charity events, art exhibitions "outside" and increased escorts have taken place towards this end, in conjunction with the Prison Director for Family Matters based on individual need of the prisoners, including attending family celebrations (weddings), hospital visits to see family members and home leave.

Telephone calls

99. All inmates are provided with unlimited access to telephone calls on a daily basis. In many cases the Prisons Administration provides inmates with mobile devices, especially those with limited financial resources.

SKYPE communication (Voice-over-internal protocol technology)

100. Since January 2015, Cyprus is one of the very few countries internationally providing the option to foreign inmates to contact their relatives and friends through SKYPE.

Education, sports, purposeful activities for all inmates (school, vocational training, physical education, sports, purposeful activities)

101. New policies in line with European recommendations (No. R(87)3 and No. R (81) 17 on adult education policy) have been implemented. The updated/revised school programme maintains the same standards with the educational system of the country at all levels, at secondary, higher and tertiary levels and is made available to all prisoners. In the Government's efforts to support and assist this vulnerable group of people, prisoners are granted the choice to partake in education or work, while ensuring that in parallel recreational activities, including sports have been enhanced under the supervision of qualified specialists.

102. Socialisation of inmates is deemed of great value, and towards this end events are organised for inmates to partake in music concerts, art exhibitions, cinema nights, or DJ-d gatherings.

103. To bring further transparency and visibility, but also to assist prisoners on an individual level, but also to bring them closer to the outside world, they are permitted to participate in events such as Europa Donna-International Day against Breast Cancer, gay pride parade, theatrical performances, International Day against Drugs, charity events, arts and crafts exhibitions, blood donations, Cleaning Cyprus and volunteer events, among others.

104. Rehabilitation programmes are also tailored to assist inmates with mental health problems, addiction issues, including narcotics, while special programmes are also available to young offenders and women.

Nutrition/daily menus

105. Since diet and nutrition are such an integral component of well-being, the quality and quantity of the food has been improved, with special meals meeting individual needs, including health, allergies and religious needs.

Right to medical care

106. Right to medical care for prisoners is deemed all-important, and the prison reform has ensured that all prisoners have access to medical doctors (GPs, Psychiatrists) and psychologists, while there is coverage by nursing staff is located on 24-hour basis within the prison facilities, while prison officers have received up-to-date first aid training.

107. Within 24 hours of admission to the prison facilities, inmates are medically screened. In respecting inmate's rights to their privacy, prison officials are only informed of the state of health of inmates on a strictly need-to-know basis.

108. During medical examinations, medical orderlies are present only upon the request of healthcare workers. Every trimester, the Prisons management have meetings with the doctors working in the Prisons Department as well as when deemed necessary on an ad hoc basis.

Safeguarding the rights of foreign nationals who are in detention

109. 40% of the prison population is non-Cypriot. They are actively involved in all activities/ education/ health care/ work, and the principle of non-discrimination is fully respected. The manual on their rights is an essential component to ensuring they are fully informed, hence the emphasis of ensuring its availability in such a wide-variety of languages (18 and Braille), as noted beforehand.

Arrangements in place to enable prisoners to attend religious services

110. Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all prisoners, and religious representatives can visit the Prison and meet with the inmates. Furthermore, visits are also arranged for religious festivals of the Christian, Islamic and Buddhist faiths.

Financial assistance to inmates

111. Prisoners with restricted financial resources are assisted financially, while beyond mobile devices, they may be given clothing items, free tele-cards, canteen coupons, etc.

Prevention of suicide and self-harm, inter-prisoner violence

112. The prison management has made suicide prevention a priority, and in the last three years, there have been zero suicides, with one attempted suicide in 2015. Similarly, attempts to curb self-harming have led to decreasing incidents, with only one taking place in 2017.

113. Policies and procedures have been put in place to prevent inter-prisoner violence and bullying, including regular risk assessments, specialised training of prison officers to identifying vulnerable inmates, risks, mental health factors, etc.[57]

Irregular migrants[58]

114. The Establishment and Regulation of Premises of Irregular Immigrants Law of 2011, [83(I)/2011] and the Regulations made under this Law, grant a number of rights to detainees held at Menoyia Detention Center. These includes material conditions (adequate lighting, ventilation, air-conditioning, call-bell, access to water and food, provision of personal hygiene products, etc), facilitation of communication and visits with relatives, friends, lawyers, NGOs, Ombudsperson, UNHCR, etc, telephone and male communication, adequate nutrition, access to lawyers and doctors, interpretation, as well as access to outdoor exercise.

115. The past practice of locking detainees in cells during sleeping hours was terminated. The cells are now open all days and at all hours. To further improve detention conditions,

the facilities were repainted, paintings were placed on walls, books/games are provided, internet and skype is offered, computers were placed in every wing and exercise equipment was installed at the outdoor area.[59]

116. Menoyia Detention Centre is staffed with a doctor and a nurse on a daily basis, with a mental health nurse visit in three times per week, while a clinical psychologist goes once a week.[60] Additionally, educational programmes are offered to detainees by the MOEC (gymnastic, painting, etc). Lastly, every detainee is informed about the rights provided in the legislation (orally and in writing). An informative booklet was prepared and is available in 18 languages[61].

IV. Combating trafficking in human beings[62]

117. Cyprus has prioritised combating trafficking in human beings. As a result of enhanced and thorough investigation and meticulous evidence gathering, there have been stringent and lengthier sentences imposed in trafficking cases, for sexual and labour exploitation. International cooperation and especially through the channels of Europol and Interpol is continuing on a systematic basis.[63]

A. Legal framework

118. The Prevention and Combating of Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons and the Protection of Victims Law of 2014, [L. 60(I)/2014] transposes all relevant EU Directives, and makes provisions for the implementation of all European and International binding legal instruments ratified by Cyprus.

119. The purpose of this Law is to prevent, suppress and combat the crime of trafficking, exploitation and abuse of persons, to protect and support the victims of such offences, to establish control mechanisms and to promote international cooperation for the implementation of the above measures.

120. It provides for the protection and promotion of the rights of victims without any discrimination and access to compensation, including special provisions for the support and protection of child victims of trafficking, including in the context of criminal investigations.

121. It also provides for prevention and intervention programmes and for new administrative structures, including the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group to combat Trafficking in Human Beings (THB). Supplementary legislation ensures sanctioning employers who illegally employ undocumented migrants, providing witness protection to victims of trafficking, including at trial, as well as ensuring that legal counsel, assistance and representation is provided for free to victims.

B. Strategic framework

Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group against Trafficking in Human Beings (MCG)

122. This Group formulates policy, coordinates and ensures implementation of specific actions, comprising all relevant government Services as well as four NGOs.

National Action Plan against Human Trafficking 2016-2018 (NAP)

123. The 2016–2018 Action Plan was devised taking into account the lessons-learnt from the previous 2013–2015 Plan, the proposals of members of the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group, and the provisions of Directive 2011/36/EU and of the European Strategy against Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016. It has also included the recommendations of GRETA (the Council of Europe Committee of Experts) and the US State Department Report (TIP Report 2016). Amending legislation, providing support for victims with special emphasis on safe accommodation, training of frontline officers, judges, as well as increased cooperation between Government agencies and NGOs are the pillars of the current Plan.

National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – Guide for handling victims of trafficking

124. The NRM was drafted by the MCG and adopted in May 2016. It defines the cooperation framework between the relevant Services and between the relevant Services and NGOs, in order to ensure the access of victims to their rights and to create a protective framework. If a person or Service believes or has reasonable suspicion that any person may be a victim of trafficking, the potential victim is referred to the Social Welfare Services (SWS), who then provide necessary information and notify the Police anti-trafficking unit, who is responsible for the official identification of trafficking victims.[64]

C. Measures to address human trafficking and protection of victims

125. In addition to the legal framework, the Government undertook a number of practical and action-oriented measures, supporting and protecting victims as well as implementing prevention measures.

126. In particular, the Office of Combating THB is the specialized investigation unit within the Cyprus Police for investigating cases of THB. Among the duties of the Office is to investigate all serious cases of THB, the identification of the victims, the assistance and guidance of other Police Departments related to issues of trafficking and exploitation. The role and competences of the Office have been expanded since March 2015. Specialized investigators joint existent staff and undertake tasks within an upgraded framework. The empowerment of the Office aimed at the qualitative, proper and in depth investigation of trafficking cases by the Police, as well as the improvement of the operational aspects of the Police's actions.

1. Support and protection of victims

127. Victims are entitled to psycho-social services, health care, translation and interpretation services, education, vocational training and financial assistance. Victims are provided information concerning their rights and access to services and the necessary support (e.g. government shelter, etc.). Also an evaluation assessment is performed to identify their needs in order to refer them to the appropriate government agencies and NGOs for assistance.

128. The government has adequately trained staff to provide support to victims of trafficking. Victims are referred to the MOH for mental and psychological assessment and the MLWSI for employment services, etc. Specifically, in 2017, 68 victims (37 women and 31 men) having been informed of their rights, were referred for medical care and treatment, registered as unemployed and for seeking assistance in finding employment, as well as to NGOs for housing and other support services.

129. The SWS operate a specialized shelter for victims of trafficking available to accommodate only women victims of sexual exploitation. In case a victim does not wish to stay in the shelter, financial and other support (housing provided by NGOs) is provided for as long as required. The government provides a rent subsidy and a monthly allowance for female sex trafficking victims who choose not to stay in the shelter, as well as to female labour trafficking victims and all male victims. Also, trafficking victims have the right to apply for the Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI), Benefit which aims to ensure a socially acceptable minimum standard of living for persons (and families) legally residing in the Republic of Cyprus whose income and other economic resources are insufficient to meet their basic and special needs. All victims of trafficking and/or sexual exploitation, who are non-EU citizens, have free access to employment during the period of the judicial examination of their case. Victims who wish to work can visit the Public Employment Services where they are provided with support in finding employment by a suitably trained and qualified Employment Counsellor, through a personalized approach. In cases of child victims, decisions are taken in the best interest of the child in cooperation with all government Services and NGOs.

130. Protection and support to victims is also given during the trial process, including psychological support. Victims of trafficking are considered witnesses who are entitled to

protection measures according to the *Protection of Witnesses Law*. 'The citizen's line' has been established where people may refer in order to provide information, make a complaint or ask for assistance. When the information concerns trafficking, it will be referred to the competent Police Anti-trafficking Unit, or if a victim calls, they will be assisted following the National Referral Mechanism. The relevant authorities are in the process of establishing an Anti-Trafficking line.

2. Prevention measures

131. Training of professionals is very important in the fight against trafficking in human beings in a proactive manner. In 2017 over 200 police officers (incl. border guards), immigration officers, social welfare officers, health officers, asylum officers, municipalities, labour inspectors, were trained. Special training on prevention was also provided to civil wedding officers in municipalities, due to high prevalence of human trafficking for the purpose of sham marriages.

132. Lectures on trafficking issues, evolving trends, dealing with potential victims, identification techniques and handling of victims are included in numerous programmes offered by the Cyprus Police Academy.

133. Training and workshops are provided for all governmental Services, with special emphasis on teachers.

134. Within the framework of the NAP against Trafficking 2016-2018, a protocol of cooperation between the SWS and an NGO was signed, aiming to enhance the coordination, cooperation and collaboration between the government and the NGOs, in the provision of protection and support of victims of trafficking, including their access to information, housing, employment and social integration. A Protocol of Cooperation was also signed between the Cyprus Police and twelve NGOs for the protection and promotion of human rights, which also covers issues of trafficking in human beings.[65]

V. Independent role of the ombudsperson[66]

135. Guarantees of Independence are provided by the legislation so that the Ombudsperson, (Commissioner for Administration) both as a person and as an Institution, avoids conflict of interest and fulfils his/her mandate in an independent, impartial and effective way, without interferences of any kind.[67]

136. With *the Commissioner for Administration (Amendment) Law of 2011,[L. 158(I)/2011]*, the institution of the Commissioner for Administration was renamed to Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights and it was provided with broad functions of protecting, promoting and guaranteeing human rights as a National Human Rights Institution, in line with the Paris Principles. It has been accredited as a National Human Rights Institution with B status, under the Paris Principles, in November 2015.[68] Gradual steps for improvements are under consideration in order to meet criteria for upgrading to a status.

137. Furthermore, in 2014, the Commissioner of Administration Law of 1991 was amended with the aim to strengthen the role of the Ombudsperson. This amendment introduced provisions that strengthen the ability of the Commissioner to promote the implementation of her Recommendations. Additionally, the Law introduced provisions that strengthened the obligation of every Ministry, Department or Independent Authority of the Republic to cooperate with the Commissioner, and provides that the refusal to cooperate is a disciplinary offense.[69]

138. Moreover, the Office of the Ombudsperson has its own separate budget, as is the case of the other Independent Authorities of the Republic. The Ombudsperson is the controlling officer and manages the budget of the Office, subject to the provisions of the relevant Law for the budget and to the constitutional provisions concerning the auditing (check and control of public expenditure) of the Republic. These are considered to be consonant with principle 2 under the part entitled "Composition and guarantees of independence and pluralism" of the Paris Principles.

VI. Fiscal consolidation, economic recovery and the right to adequate standard of living[70]

139. The economic growth of the Cyprus economy continues, reaching a 4% average in the first two quarters of 2018 compared with the corresponding quarters of the previous year. The estimations of the Ministry of Finance exhibit that the growth rate will be as high as 4% for the whole of 2018. In the medium term, the annual growth rate for 2019–2021 is expected to fluctuate between 3.0%–3.8% in real terms.

140. The constant recovery of the Cyprus economy after the devastating financial crisis is reflected in the labour market where a climate of confidence and stability is established. Unemployment rate will fluctuate around 8.5%this year, compared to over 15.9% in 2013 and down from 11.1% in 2017. The constant economic recovery that is expected for 2019–2021 enhances assessments for a further decline of the unemployment rate, which is estimated to be contained at 5.5% in the end of the forecasting period when the Cyprus economy is foreseen to reach its long run equilibrium.

141. The Government of Cyprus implemented an EU-IMF macroeconomic adjustment programme during the period 2013-16, undertaking major reforms in the areas of public finance, the financial sector, the labour market and other structural reforms in key sectors of the economy, which resulted in stabilizing and successfully turning the economy into positive growth territory from 2015 onwards. Labour market flexibility has also prevented initial forecasts of very high unemployment rates to materialise.

142. In March 2016, Cyprus successfully exited its three-year Economic Adjustment Programme and is now subject to post-programme surveillance (PPS) until at least 75% of the financial assistance received has been repaid. The success of the Economic Adjustment Programme was based on three axis: (1) a fiscal strategy that was proved to be very efficient because of better than expected economic environment, resilience of revenues and containment of wage bills, pensions and social benefits, (2) structural reforms concerning the pension system, the unification of tax department and the welfare system with the replacement of various public assistance benefits with a Guaranteed Minimum Income and finally with reforms in the public financial system allowing for flexibility to line ministries while fostering accountability and transparency and also for systemic assessment, monitoring and management of fiscal risks, (3) active market labour market policies covering vulnerable groups of the population, inter alia the unemployed. For the years 2015–2022 91.8 million euro were devoted to reactivate unemployed persons so as to maintain their previous and acquire new skill.

143. At the same time, it is vital to refer to the relative poverty rate and income distribution data as reflected by the last EU SILC results showing that the relevant indicators have been corrected significantly. The risk of poverty or social exclusion has decreased in 2017 by 2.5% between 2016 and 2017: from 27.7% to 25.2%. Income distribution indicators as shown in the graph attached (Annex II) based upon the last EU SILC database with reference year 2017, exhibit that income distribution has gradually returned to its pre-crisis levels, with s80/s20 and the gini coefficient to pursue a parallel declining trend.

VII. Rights of religious minorities[71]

144. The Republic of Cyprus has ratified the Council of Europe *"Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities"* and the *"European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages"*. The Framework Convention covers the Armenians, the Maronites and the Latins, the three religious minority groups recognized as such by the Constitution of the Republic, while the Armenian language and Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA) are protected under the Charter. The MOEC constantly strives to meet the educational needs of the members of the religious minority groups and to ensure that their rights, deriving from the Convention and the Charter, are fully exercised. Consequently, the MOEC has taken several measures to support the educational needs of children belonging to the religious minority groups.[72]

145. The Cultural Services of the MOEC further promote and protect the rights of religious minority groups. Until recently, subsidies for cultural activities for religious minority groups were granted through the *"Culture Programme"*, in the same way that they were granted to all citizens of the Republic of Cyprus. As of 2018, separate funds are reserved and dedicated to the three religious minority groups, following close consultation with the three minority communities. The Cultural Services encourage and support the co-operation of religious minority groups with neighbouring countries, particularly, Armenia and Lebanon. Suitable premises to serve as cultural centres are also available for the relevant groups. The Ministry of Interior has given the Latin community premises for a cultural centre. For the Maronite community, suitable premises have been created and the Armenians have their own premises. The Cyprus Symphonic Orchestra Foundation is financing musical performances of the religious minority groups and the Youth Board of Cyprus subsidizes cultural and sports events.

146. In 2012, the Ministry of Interior, prepared and published for the first time a series of three publications, each dedicated to one of the religious groups in Cyprus, namely the Armenians, the Maronites and the Latins, in the Greek and English. Each provides a basic overview, an introductory outline about the members of the respective religious group, its history and culture as well as its contribution to the Cyprus society at large. Each publication was prepared in close collaboration with the Representative of the respective religious group in the House of Representatives. In 2013, the publications on the Maronites and Latins were translated and published in Italian.

147. During the period 2014–2018, extensive reference to the religious groups of Cyprus was also made in a number of informative publications of the Public Information Office (PIO).

148. All the PIO's productions and publications which pertain or refer to the three religious are available free of charge, widely circulated and are also accessible online via the PIO's website.

149. The MOEC continues the coordination of the Erasmus+ project *"iDecide"* (2016-2018), which has developed an innovative toolkit and induction course to support evidence-based policy making, which can lead to the reduction of disparities in learning outcomes and marginalization, by supporting school leaders, school staff, and policymakers to engage in shared and inclusive decision making. By implementing the toolkit and collecting rich data, the project aims to understand the complexities of how decisions at school level influence marginalized groups and develop concrete recommendations for policy and practice on how to engage in shared decision making, giving voice to all stakeholders. One of the most important deliverables of the project will be the *"iDecide Toolkit"*, which will, among others, invite school leaders and staff to consider the following factors when making decisions:

- *Cultural differences:* Visits to religious sites need to take into consideration the various religions represented in the school population/community of the area/country in order to ensure that religious sites belonging to religious minorities will not be neglected systematically (regardless of intention).
- *Disability – Health issues:* All disabilities/health issues/dietary requirements of the school population and the potential difficulties they may encounter in the initial plan of the excursion/school visit need to be considered.
- *Economic obstacles:* Depending on the socioeconomic status of each pupil, school leaders and staff need to be sensitive of the cost.
- *Geographical obstacles:* The location of the community and the distance that children may need to travel everyday between the school and their homes needs to be taken into consideration.
- *Social obstacles:* Before decisions are taken social characteristics of the pupil population such as the type of their family, the citizenship status of the parents etc. need to be considered.

VIII. Way forward

150. During the period under review, there were significant positive developments regarding Cyprus compliance with human rights instruments. Many laws were enacted, and policies adopted, while several National Action Plans were initiated.

151. Despite the difficulties posed by the financial crisis, of 2013 the Government has allocated considerable resources for the consolidation of human rights protection in all sectoral policies and to promoting a shift of attitudes and culture towards a human rights based approach. Specialized training of the Police, the SWS, the Asylum Service, the Health Care Services Personnel and the teachers was further adapted to international standards in order to address, more effectively, challenges related to racism and xenophobia, domestic violence, human trafficking and sexual exploitation. The Reform of the Educational System was further developed, as an ongoing process, aiming at promoting human rights. The consolidation of a robust system to combat trafficking in human beings and an enhanced policy and infrastructure to deal with the challenge of excessive migratory flows have led to important improvements in safeguarding human rights.

152. The envisioned way forward entails the reunification of the country and the end of the foreign military occupation lasting for over 44 years, which will allow for the restoration of human rights of all the people of Cyprus, with respect to the rule of law and in full accordance with the universal principles of human rights.

153. Cyprus is determined to intensify its efforts to safeguard human rights and is strongly committed to continue working for the further advancement of raising awareness and education on human rights, despite the current economic constrains which have negatively affected the country's economy and social cohesion. Cyprus will spare no effort to uphold and take into serious consideration the recommendations emanating from this review and is committed to working with all relevant stakeholders. The constructive dialogue during the UPR process is a great opportunity to both build upon existing practices and initiate new ones to this end.

Notes

[1] Recommendations 114.1, 114.6, 114.11, 114.12, 114.13, 114.15, 114.23, 114.24, 114.27.
[2] L. 14(III)/2017).
[3] Recommandations 114.7, !14.12.
[4] Recommandations 114.2–7.
[5] Recommandation 114.13.
[6] Recommandations 114.8–9, 114.11.
[7] Recommendation 114.10.
[8] Recommendation 114.27.
[9] Recommendations 114.14–15.
[10] Recommendations 114.22, 114.25, 114.26, 114.28, 114.31, 114.32, 114.39, 114.73, 114.74.
[11] Recommendation 114.22.
[12] Recommendations 114.77–78.
[13] Recommendation 144.36.
[14] Recommendation 144.32.
[15] Recommendation 144.27.
[16] Recommendations 144.36–39.
[17] (Law 100(I)/1997).
[18] Recommendations 114.33, 114.54–57.
[19] The duties of the Family Counsellors include the following: (1) Investigation of complaints on domestic violence (2)Family counseling to handle issues that are likely to lead to, or have led to, the use of violence (3) Arranging an immediate medical examination of the complainant (4)Taking all necessary actions for the commencement of criminal proceedings against perpetrators (5) Taking action for the accommodation / financial affairs of the family and the perpetrator, if an inhibition order is being considered.
[20] Measures implemented include: (1) the encouragement to report cases of violence, (2)the launching of awareness-raising campaigns addressed to the general public and women in particular, (3) the systematic training of professionals working in the field, (4) the strengthening of the Police Domestic

Violence and Child Abuse Office, (5) the Government support to NGOs providing protection and assistance to women victims, (6)the improvement of data collection, and (7) the development of research in the field of Violence Against Women.

[21] To give full effect to the Istanbul Convention, a call for proposals was published for NGOs for the development of two new shelters, as well as a Centre of Multidisciplinary Support for women victims of violence.

[22] Recommendations 114.34–35, 114.74.

[23] Recommendations 114.40–44,114.84, 114.86, 114.88.

[24] Recommendations 114.101–114.104.

[25] Please see attached Annex I on the Contribution of European Funds Unit, Ministry of interior, particularly pages 3-5 concerning Vulnerable Groups.

[26] The Asylum Service grants a monthly allowance to cover basic personal needs. Three ready meals are provided daily, as well as free daily transportation from/to the Centre.

[27] Also, please see attached Annex I on the Contribution of European Funds Unit, MOI, particularly at p.p.6–8 concerning Discrimination as well as p.p. 10-20 concerning Protection of the Rights of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers. Emphasis to be given to 7.4. in relation to improving reception of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection and access to acceptable housing, (p.p.15–16).

[28] Also, please see attached Annex I on the Contribution of European Funds Unit, MOI, particularly p.p. 10-20 concerning Protection of the Rights of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers. Emphasis to be given at para 7.7, 7.13 and 7.14.

[29] Also, please see attached Annex I on the Contribution of European Funds Unit, MOI, particularly at p.p. 10–20 concerning Protection of the Rights of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers. Emphasis to be given at para 7.4–13. in relation to Free legal assistance / aid for applicants of international protection, (p.p.18–20).

[30] Recommendation 114.91.

[31] Also, please see attached Document on the Contribution of European Funds Unit, MOI, particularly at p.p.6–8 concerning Discrimination as well as p.p. 10–20 concerning Protection of the Rights of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

[32] Recommendations 114.29–30, 114.46–47.

[33] Recommendation 114.73.

[34] Recommendations 114.83, 114.85,114.98.

[35] Recommendation 114.90.

[36] Also, please see attached Annex I on the Contribution of European Funds Unit, MOI, particularly at p.p. 3–5 concerning Vulnerable Groups, in addition to 6-8 concerning Discrimination as well as p.p. 10–20 concerning Protection of the Rights of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

[37] Recommendations 114.92–93.

[38] Recommendations 114.95–97.

[39] Recommendations 114.89, 114.99–100.

[40] Also, please see attached Annex I on the Contribution of European Funds Unit, MOI, particularly at p.p. 10–20 concerning Protection of the Rights of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

[41] For migrant Children see above p.17.

[42] Recommendation 114.58.

[43] The Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2014.

[44] Recommendations 114.80–82.

[45] Recommendation 114.71.

[46] -Convention on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No, 10 (2007), Children's Rights in Juvenile Justice CRC/C/GC/10, 25 April 2007.
-United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice ("The Beijing Rules"), General Assembly resolution 40/33 of 29 November 1985.
-United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (The Riyadh Guidelines), General Assembly resolution 45/112 of 14 December 1990.
-United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (The Havana Guidelines), General Assembly resolution 45/113 of 14 December 1990.
-Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime adopted by Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/20 of 22 July 2005.
-Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on Child-friendly Justice and their explanatory memorandum- Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 November 2010 at the 1098th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies- Guidelines and Explanatory memorandum.
-DIRECTIVE (EU) 2016/800 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 May 2016, on procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal

proceedings.

[47] The National Strategy includes specific legal, administrative, social and educational measures to address the needs of vulnerable groups of children including girls, children with disabilities, migrant children and children in need of care.

[48] Recommendation 114.105.

[49] Recommendations 114.48–114.50, 114.59.

[50] Recommendation 114.31.

[51] Greek, English, Turkish, Russian, Arabic and French.

[52] Recommendations 114.51–52.

[53] Improved infrastructure (1) The glass between detainees and visitors from the visiting rooms was removed, (2) The detention centres are painted in a friendlier colour, (3) Some of the glass block windows were removed from the police detention centres and were replaced with windows that provide more access to natural !ights and fresh air.

[54] Instructions included the following: (1) Transportation of all immigration detainees from police detention centers to Menoyia Detention Center within 48 hours (2) Implementation of the visiting schedule, according to the relevant Police Standing Order and (3) placement of signs in all police stations with the visiting hours, (4)Information of persons arrested and detained about their rights both orally and in writing, (5) Systematic inspection of detainees files in order to ensure the proper completion of the file, (6) Placement of the Detainees Rights in the cells, (7) guaranteeing the right of the arrested person for contacting a person of his/her choice in the presence of the Police, (8) Proper completion of the medical form by the medical officer after medical examinations,(9) Prohibition of isolation and any other form of punishment, (10) Provision of specific personal hygiene items (soap, shampoo, toilet paper, toothpaste, toothbrush and personal hygiene items for women), (11) Organization of inter-departmental training on issues relating to human rights and treatment of detainees.

[55] (1) Clear reference of the reasons of his/her arrest or detention and about the offence that he/she is accused of having committed, (2) The right of access to a lawyer,(3) The right of free legal aid/assistance and the conditions required of such assistance, (4) The right of interpretation and translation, (5) The right to remain silent and non self-discrimination, (6) The rights of communicating with a lawyer and or any other persons in order to inform them about the arrest and/or detention,(7) The place of detention. (8) The right of access to the material of the case, (9) The right to inform the consular authorities or any other person, (10) The right of access to urgent medical care, (11) The maximum time of detention, and (12) The right to challenge the lawfulness of the arrest and detention.

[56] Greek, English, Turkish, Arabic, Bulgarian, French Georgian, Persian, Ukrainian, Polish, Russian, Rumanian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, German, Spanish, Italian and Hungarian.

[57] Also, please see attached Document on the Contribution of European Funds Unit, MOI, particularly at p.p.8–9 concerning Detention and particularly regarding measures to improve detention conditions.

[58] Recommendation 114.53.

[59] Also, please see attached the Annex I on the Contribution of European Funds Unit, MOI, particularly at pp.8–9 concerning detention and measures to improve detention conditions.

[60] Also, please see attached the Annex I on the Contribution of European Funds Unit, MOI, particularly at pp.8–9 concerning detention and measures to improve detention conditions.

[61] Greek, English, Turkish, Polish, Hindi, Vietnamese, Bulgarian, Arabic, French, Georgian, Chinese, Urdu, Persian, Serbian, Romanian, Filipino, Srilankan and Russian.

[62] Recommendations 114.60–70.

[63] Also please see attached Document on the Contribution of European Funds Unit, MOI particularly pp. 9–10 concerning Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

[64] Also please see attached Document on the Contribution of European Funds Unit, MOI particularly pp. 9–10 concerning Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

[65] Also please see attached Annex I on the Contribution of European Funds Unit, MOI particularly pp. 9–10 concerning Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

[66] Recommendations 114.16–21.

[67] The Ombudsperson: (1) is appointed for a term of six years; (2) May not hold any other post of or office in the Republic or engage in any other occupation in payment; (3) Before assuming his/her duties, shall make an affirmation before the President of the House of Representatives, that he/she will carry out his duties faithfully; (4) During his/her term of office, may not be dismissed or withdraw from Office, except for the same reasons and in the same way that judges of the Supreme Court may be dismissed or withdraw from Office; (5) No legal proceeding may be brought against him/her in relation to any act done by him/her or any opinion expressed by him/her or report submitted by him/her in the exercise of his/her functions, provide that he/she has exercised his functions and powers under the Law in good faith and within their limits. (6) The Commissioner or

any other member of the staff of his/her Office may not be called to testify before a Court or in any proceedings of a legal nature in respect of any matter that has come to his Knowledge in the exercise of his/her duties.

[68] The Ombudsperson has now responsibility through the exercise of its own power to submit opinions, recommendations, proposals and reports which relate to the following areas. (1) Any situations of violation of human rights which decides to take up. (2) The national situation with regards to human rights in general and on more specific matters (3) Drawing the attention of the Government to situations in any part of the country where human rights are violated and making proposals to it for initiatives to put an end to such situations.

[69] The Law expressly provides for the obligation of the competent authority to consult with the Commissioner as to the findings in his/her report and to provide information as to the actions undertaken to comply with the suggestions there in. When the competent authority does not comply with the suggestions of the Commissioner and the latter considers that the reasons are not justified, then the Commissioner submits the outcome of the consultation to the Council of Ministers and the House of Representatives and may publish the refusal or omission of the competent authority to comply with the Commissioner's suggestions.

[70] Recommendations 114.75–76.

[71] Recommendations 114.45, 114.72.

[72] Please see Annex III for examples of these measures.